

A

BR

125

.T3

1857

AUBURN UNIVERSITY
LIBRARIES



Purchased through the
Auburn Generations Fund

NON CIRCULATING

Digitized by the Internet Archive
- in 2010 with funding from
Lyrasis Members and Sloan Foundation

THE
GRACE OF GOD
MAGNIFIED:
AN EXPERIMENTAL TRACT.

BY H. E. TALIAFERRO,
JUNIOR EDITOR OF THE S. W. BAPTIST, TUSKEGEE, ALA.

“By the grace of God I am what I am.”—PAUL.

CHARLESTON:
SOUTHERN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
No. 229 King-street.
1857.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857,
BY THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of South-
Carolina.

CHARLESTON:
JAMES AND WILLIAMS, PRINTERS,
16 STATE STREET.

AUBURN UNIVERSITY
RALPH BROWN DRAUGHON LIBRARY
AUBURN, ALA. 36849

A
BR
125
T3
1857
4/19/93
FF

PREFACE.

THE precious work of grace in my soul, wrought by the Holy Spirit, and detailed in the following pages, was completed in June, 1851. Up to this time, I have related it to but few persons. I purposely concealed it, "lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me." But the few to whom I have ventured to detail it, uniformly suggested its publication in some form. The passage, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren," was often suggested as a reason; but no permanent impression was made on my mind to give it publicity, till May 1856, when I mentioned the subject to a friend, whose judgment I greatly respect, in a letter. He responded, "Write it out, by all means;—publish it. It will do good to souls, and lead to a deeper tone of piety."

Prompted by such encouragement, and influenced by the motives presented in this extract, I commenced the narrative; and at intervals, from pressing engagements, have completed it; and now I present it to God's people, hoping it may aid them in their pilgrimage. It claims no literary merit; of its defects in that regard, I am fully aware. I have written it plainly, for all classes. The letters which I wrote during the time of my conflict, were not expected to be seen by any, but those to whom

AFW 8597

they were addressed. I have introduced them into these pages, with but little verbal alteration. I wished them to show the feelings of my heart at the time. The friend before alluded to, advised me in regard to the letters—"Let every word stay as you wrote it; for the thoughts came out as you felt them." I now give this *imperfect work* into the hands of Him who wrought *perfect work* in my soul; and may He dispose of it as seemeth good in His sight.

H. E. T.

Tuskegee, Ala., Jan. 1st, 1857.

INTRODUCTION.

“Grace Magnified.” I have just turned over the last leaf of this narrative, of a deeper work of grace on a believer’s heart. I will not call it *engaging*; lest the natural fondness for what is simply *easy* and *pleasant*, may lead the reader to expect *entertainment* in it. Yet, if the reader be one whose heart the Lord has touched, this narrative will be so far engaging, that having once taken it up, he will not spontaneously lay it down until he has finished its continuous and anxious perusal; and the subject will have left such an impression on his mind, that he will be engaged to pray and labor all the residue of life, that grace may be so magnified also in himself.

There is a tendency in man, not peculiar to one age, to be superficial in religion—to heal the hurt slightly, “saying peace, peace; when there is no peace.” While we have reason to expect that in the advanced gospel times, abounding in knowledge and the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the Redeemer will make a “*short work*” in the earth—it may be seriously inquired whether there are not tendencies to abbreviation and slightness sufficient to make the ‘professed subjection of some to the gospel of Christ fall short of true regeneration. When it does

occur, it is a fearful evil in the church of Christ; eluding and scorning a cure.

Since the excellence of true religion is known and admitted, it is not wonderful that there should be many imperfect and *inadequate* presentations of it. There will be those who will form their ideas of a soldier by seeing a uniform company in dress-parade on a May morning; or of the qualities necessary for an ancient eastern shepherd, (1 Sam. xvii. 34-36.) by the romantic image of ruddy-faced youths playing on instruments under the shade, while their flocks are quietly feeding near them.

Quite as erroneously, and far more fatally, do many form ideas of religion. Without conviction at heart of sin, in its deep depravity and vileness, they have no travail, no struggles, no self-loathing, no utter abasement and self renunciation, no lying infinitely low before God. Having no just conceptions of the eternal rectitude of God's law, its spirituality and extent—they see no aptness, nor any necessity, in that vast expenditure of redemption—"God was manifest in the flesh," etc. 1 Tim. iii. 16. The conception they have of their case relatively to God, requires no such combination of majesty and grace, of sovereignty and condescension, as are seen in Christ—making Him the chiefest of ten thousand, and altogether lovely. They never have been slain by the law; and the gospel is received as a cold intellectuality, not as a life-giving influence. They look on Christ as an amiable exemplar, in relation to social life; but have no relish for that great, high, holy gentleness in which he bears our sins and carries our sorrows, and makes reconciliation of our great quarrel with our

Maker. Such delight as they take in religion is more a self-righteous complacency in their own exercises, than a profound, serene, adoring satisfaction in the great facts of the gospel. If they can but conceive well of their own personal share in the favor of God, they stop short of that generous and higher satisfaction reserved for those who see such a beauty and glory in the person of Christ, and in the methods of mercy, as scarcely to admit the necessity of asking for their own personal interest in them. Satisfied with slender evidences of amendment, and of the undefined presence of some better thoughts and purposes, they do not struggle on, through the demands and clamors of God's perfect law, to plant themselves on the infinite satisfaction rendered by Christ—their "wisdom, their righteousness, their sanctification, their redemption." They know nothing of that deep and settled security in Christ, which those feel who "take hold of God's covenant," who know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and who, thus found in Him, receive a righteousness as theirs, not less perfect than His—in all its amplitude and completeness. They conceive of themselves as having *not much* forgiven, and they love *not much*. The blessedness of simple duty, and service; of doing what is meet and right to be done agreeably to the holy mind of God, they but faintly conceive of, and never realize.

Now, not to speak of the *danger* of such, it is obvious that they fall far below their privileges in Christ. The narrative before us is specially interesting, as showing, in a *recent* instance, what is attainable. This it does without superstition or fanaticism. It lays claim to no

new revelation, but leads us safely on in the footsteps of the faith of the Bible saints, who have finished their course with joy. It has no alliance to the pretended revealments of an effete spiritualism. The word of God, in its plain and sober interpretation, is here shown, invested with its appropriate living efficacy, leading a soul to Christ; in whom believing, though now he sees him not, he rejoices with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

If this be the proper effect of believing all God's word, why should not all feel it? Christ may well ask now, as formerly—"Do ye now believe?" But I will not detain the reader further from the perusal of the narrative. "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: *Cause me to hear it!*"

B. MANLY.

Charleston, S. C., Jan. 23, 1857.

THE GRACE OF GOD MAGNIFIED.

IN November, 1831, through faith, God revealed his Son to me, a poor sinner. I was happy in the Lord Jesus, and rejoiced in the God of my salvation. Prompted by duty and gratitude, I united with his people, and was baptized in the month following. I commenced in a feeble way to exercise a gift, which my ascended and glorified Master had given me, in the Spring of 1832. And from that day to this, I have been, according to the Grace of God given unto me, testifying to saint and sinner, "the gospel of the Grace of God."

But, reader, it is not my intention in this narrative, to give you an account of my travel, trials, conflicts, joys and pleasures from the day of my new creation to the present hour; but to give you a plain and truthful account of the grace of God bestowed on me, after many years. In 1851, God in mercy and

grace, wrought a work in my heart, which "my soul hath still in remembrance and is humbled in me."

In a few days after the Divine Spirit, whose right it is, took of the things of Christ and showed them unto me, I was violently assaulted with doubts and fears as to my acceptance with God; which annoyed me greatly till I was relieved by other manifestations of my acceptance in the Beloved. But my untiring Adversary never forsook me long at a time; and I was harassed with perplexing doubts and fears and sceptical suggestions for upwards of twenty years. True—during this long period I had seasons of precious enjoyment, and often wondered why I so needlessly doubted my Saviour's love to me, and my union with him through faith. But "the clouds would soon return after the rain"—clouds of darkness, gloom and horror—that unfitted me for the effective discharge of my ministerial duties, and destroyed my enjoyment as a Christian. Instead of obeying the command, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people," I needed some "son of consolation" to "strengthen my weak hands and to confirm my feeble knees;"

to say to my "fearful heart, be strong, fear not."

In 1848 my fears were greatly aroused by reading a sketch of a sermon by Andrew Fuller, at the ordination of a minister of the gospel. Mr. Fuller was insisting upon the necessity of personal piety and spirituality in the minister, as essential to his happiness as a Christian, his success as a minister of Jesus, and to his everlasting salvation. As the paragraph is not long, I will transcribe it.

"A remark which I once heard from the lips of that great and good man, the late Mr. Abraham Booth, has often recurred to my recollection. 'I fear,' said he, 'there will be found a larger proportion of wicked ministers than of any other order of professing Christians.' It did not occur to me at the time, nor has it ever appeared since, that this remark proceeded from a want of charity, but rather from a deep knowledge of the nature of Christianity, and an impartial knowledge of men and things. It behoves us, not only as professing Christians, but as ministers, 'to examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith.' It certainly is possible, after we have preached to others, that we should be cast away! I believe it is

very common for the personal religion of a minister to be taken for granted, and this may prove a temptation for him to take it for granted too. Ministers being wholly devoted to the service of God, are supposed to have considerable advantages for spiritual improvement. These they certainly have; and, if their minds be spiritual, they may be expected to make greater proficiency in the divine life than their brethren. But it should be remembered that, if they are not spiritual, those things which would otherwise prove a help will prove a hindrance. If we study divine subjects merely *as ministers*, they will produce no salutary effect. We may converse with the most impressive truths, as soldiers and surgeons do with blood, till they cease to make any impression upon us. We must meditate upon these things *as Christians*, first feeding our own souls upon them, and then imparting that which we have believed and felt to others; or, whatever good we may do them, we shall receive none ourselves. Unless we mix faith with what we preach as well as what we hear, the word will not profit us. It may be on these accounts that ministers,

while employed in watching over others, are so solemnly warned against neglecting themselves: 'Take heed unto *yourselves*, and to all the flock etc.' 'Take heed unto *thyself*, and unto the doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.'"

In reading the foregoing, the thought that so overwhelmed me was this: I saw that I had up to that time, studied the Bible too much as a professional man does his books, to learn what to say and do to others; and not as a Christian should, to digest its truths, imbibe its spirit, and apply them first to myself. This I saw had been the great error of my ministerial and Christian life; and it had never occurred to me before. The suddenness of the discovery and the awfulness of the probability that, upon a close examination, I might find myself an unconverted man, filled me with confusion and alarm. My conscience reproached me sorely for my past neglect in a matter so obvious. I saw that I had been diligent in cultivating the vineyards of others, but had given mine own to the rank growth of briars and thorns, "which is rejected and

is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."

I immediately betook myself to heart-searching examination and prayer. I also read the word of God with a quickened interest, and allowed it to speak with its mighty energy to *my own heart*. The result in a short time was painful. My views of the depravity and sinfulness of my heart and nature were greatly enlarged; and the striking contrast between my impurity and the purity of the divine character covered me with shame and self-abhorrence. Added to this, were the stringent demands of the holy law of God which I could not meet, and which greatly increased my perturbation of soul. In the contemplation of these things, I lost sight of Christ as my sacrifice for sin, and the Mediator betwixt a holy God and my poor depressed soul. One look at him by faith would have relieved me; but it seemed to be the pleasure of God that I should be *sifted*, as I now hope, for the benefit of his dear children.

For some time "my tears were my meat day and night," and I kept up the importunate and anxious inquiry with my soul, "Where is thy

God?" In this state of mind, and in this course of conduct, I continued for some time, discharging my duties as a minister of the holy Jesus with great fear and trembling, occasionally experiencing a little light and comfort through the exercise of a weak faith in the Lord Jesus, until with great caution and secrecy I laid my case fully and frankly before an able, pious and experienced minister of the gospel for his opinion and advice. He, in a candid and faithful manner instructed me, and pointed me to Christ, his sacrifice for my sins, his righteousness for my clothing, his mediation as the basis of my acceptance with God, the Father, and to the Holy Spirit as my sanctifier. This he did so eloquently and clearly, that my faith laid hold of it, and I was comforted for some time.

But I relapsed again: My doubts and fears returned with increased numbers, and with a more terrible energy. The increased knowledge I had obtained of the holy character of God, by a prayerful investigation of his word; and the deeper insight which it gave me of the sinfulness and depravity of my heart, when contrasted, greatly increased my fear

and anxiety of soul. Added to this, was the alarming thought of an unconverted man being a minister of the gospel—an unholy man ministering in holy things! The fearful doom of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and of Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, loomed up before me in all its terribleness. I read it and re-read it. So concerned was I upon the subject, that I examined many commentators to get their views, and among the number, Scott; and when I read the frank confession which he took occasion to make, of entering the ministry in an unconverted state, knowingly, my mind was by no means relieved. As it is a link in the chain of my narrative; and as it displays the mercy and grace of God in a most striking manner, I will transcribe it also:

“One dreadful effect of this depravity (speaking of the depravity of heart that influences some men to enter the sacred ministry without being converted or called to the work by the Holy Spirit) is the daring presumption, with which numbers intrude into the sacred ministry, from the base motives of covetousness and ambition, and love of ease or in-

dulgence, without any suitable disposition, without any love for the work, or delight in it, any zeal for the honor of God, or any deep compassion for the souls of perishing sinners. Yet will such men dare to say, in the most solemn manner before God and his congregation, that they judge themselves 'moved by the Holy Ghost to take this work upon them;' they are not only conscious of hypocrisy in this declaration, but deride the very inquiry as enthusiasm. Of such conduct the author himself was guilty; and, to the end of his days, would he be abased before God on account of it; and admire and adore the patience and loving kindness of the Lord, that, instead of being visited after the manner of Korah, it pleased God to give him repentance and forgiveness; and to employ him in the work of the ministry, with some small degree of usefulness; 'for where sin abounded, grace hath much more abounded.' And he mentions this humilitating subject, not only that the pious reader may bless God in his behalf; but that he may hope and pray earnestly and constantly for others, who lie under the same guilt, that they may experience the same grace.—

‘For our God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.’”

While I did not regard my case as analogous to that of Mr. Scott’s—for I joined the Church of Christ prompted by pure motives, and entered the ministry from the same pure influences—*yet I may not be a converted man*, was the thought which tormented me day and night. To be lost at last as a professor; and after having preached to others the gospel of Christ, to be deceived, and “be cast away” as a preacher, these were my troubles. Thus I continued with occasional gleams of light and hope till the winter of 1850–51, when my distress of mind became almost insupportable. The more I examined my heart in the light of the holy law of God, the plainer my innate depravity appeared; and the more I examined the character of God as revealed in his word, the plainer my unfitness to appear before him in a perfect righteousness was manifested. In the contrast, the disparity was overwhelming to my soul. I had such clear views of the holiness and justice of God and such deep views of the depravity of my

heart and the sinfulness of my nature, that I often uttered, in deep anguish, Job's inquiry, "How shall a man be just with God?"

In this state of mind I would often go into the pulpit, and feel that I should be preached to, instead of preaching to others; and that I was "the chief of sinners" in the congregation. I did not feel guilty of having committed those overt acts of wickedness condemned by the word of God, and the common conscience of mankind; for such things I greatly abhorred, and my awakened and trembling conscience would not allow me to connive at them. But my thoughts were wicked, and my imagination and whole being I regarded as corrupt before a holy God. — As I have stated, often did I preach in this gloomy, despairing state of mind; sometimes in pointing sinners to Christ, I would lose sight of my vile, sinful self, and look at him whom I was commending to others, and thus be relieved and quite happy. But as soon as I would sit down, the pall of darkness would fall upon me with increased weight, not unfrequently with the horrid temptation, that there was no reality in the doctrine I had preached. Often

was my vanity approached by the suggestion, that I would better spend my time and devote my talents and energies to some pursuit in which there was a *reality*, in which there were honor and profit. It was further suggested that it would be well to let my membership remain in a Christian Church as I was already there, inasmuch as morality was a good thing any way; and *if* there was any futurity, it would be decidedly best to pursue that course. But such thoughts were so horrid to my soul, that I expelled them as soon as possible.

I would at times unbosom myself to judicious Christian people, but they could give me no comfort; for they never seemed to think that I was serious upon the subject. As I was a preacher, they took it for granted that I must be a Christian, and of course that my doubts must be unreasonable. And when I would mention the subject to preachers, they would either chide me for my unbelief or confound me with reasoning. Still, these things brought no solid comfort to my soul. When I prayed, it was, in my estimation, as a poor, polluted, guilty sinner approaching a holy God, and I

felt that I should not be heard. A full and clear view of Christ was still concealed from me.

In the year 1851, I served two churches as pastor. I commenced my year's labor with the feelings above described. But a crisis had arrived in my religious history. Something must be done. The intolerable burden, I could bear no longer. My happiness and usefulness as a Christian, (if I was one) and as a minister of Christ, were involved in the settlement of the question: *am I a Christian?* I resolved, by the help of God, to settle that hitherto perplexing question; and while the investigation was going on, I determined never to mention it to a human being, lest they should administer comfort to me, when I was not entitled to it. I saw that it was a matter pending between God and my own soul, and we were the parties to settle it. But, before I commenced the investigation, as I had purposed, it turned out in the providence of God, that I read "ELIJAH THE TISH-BITE," by KRUMMACHER, and was overpowered with the deepest emotions in reading the following incident. Though lengthy, I will give

it in full; hoping it will be blessed to the awakening of some soul now sleeping in carnal security, or some deceived one.

“There was, some years ago,” says Mr. KRUMMACHER, of Elberfeld, in the Valley of Barmen, Prussia, “not far from this place, a very gifted preacher, who for several years preached with great earnestness and success, the doctrine of the cross; but who, on that very account, was violently opposed. One of his opponents, a well informed person, who had for a long time absented himself from the church, thought, one Sunday morning, that he would go and hear the gloomy man once more; to see whether his preaching might be more tolerable to him than it had been heretofore. He went; and that morning the preacher was speaking of the narrow way, which he did not make any narrower or broader than the Word of God describes it. ‘A new creature in Christ, or eternal condemnation,’ was the theme of his discourse; and he spoke with power, and not as a mere learned reasoner. During the sermon, the question forced itself upon this hearer’s conscience, ‘How is it with myself? Does this man declare the real truth?

If he does, what must inevitably follow from it? This thought took such a hold upon him, that he could not get rid of it amidst any of his engagements or amusements. But it became, from day to day, more and more troublesome; and threatened to embitter every joy of his life; so that, at last, he thought he would go to the preacher himself, and ask him upon his conscience, if he were convinced of the truth of that which he had lately preached. He fulfilled his intention, and went to the preacher. 'Sir,' said he to him, with great earnestness, 'I was one of your hearers when you spoke, a short time since, of the only way of salvation. I confess to you that you have disturbed my peace of mind, and I cannot refrain from asking you solemnly before God, and upon your conscience, if you can prove what you asserted, or whether it was an unfounded alarm?' The preacher, not a little surprised at this address, replied with convincing certainty, that he had spoken the Word of God, and consequently, infallible truth. 'What, then, is to become of *us*,' replied the visitor. His last word, *us*, started the preacher; but he rallied his strength, and began to explain

the plan of salvation to the inquirer, and to exhort him to repent and believe. But the latter, as though he had not heard one word of what the preacher said, interrupted him in the midst of it, and repeated, with increasing emotion, the anxious exclamation, 'If it be truth, sir, I beseech you, what are *we* to do?' Terrified, the preacher staggered back. 'We!' thought he, 'what means this *we*?' and endeavoring to stifle his inward uneasiness and embarrassment, he resumed his exhortations and advice. Tears came into the eyes of the visitor; he smote his hands together like one in despair, and exclaimed in an accent, that might have moved a heart of stone, 'Sir, if it be truth, we are lost and undone!' The preacher stood pale, trembling and speechless. Then overwhelmed with astonishment, with down cast eyes and convulsive sobbings, he exclaimed, 'Friend, down on your knees, let us pray and cry for mercy!' They knelt down, and prayed; and shortly afterwards the visitor left. The preacher shut himself up in his closet. Next Sunday, word was sent that the minister was unwell, and could not appear. The same thing happened on the Sunday fol-

lowing. On the third Sunday, the preacher made his appearance before his congregation, worn with his inward conflict, and pale, but his eyes beaming with joy, and commenced his discourse with the surprising and affecting declaration, that he had now, for the first time, passed through the strait gate. You will ask, what had occurred in his chamber during the interval which had elapsed. A storm passed over before him—but the Lord was not in the storm; an earthquake—but the Lord was not in the earthquake; a fire—but the Lord was not in the fire. Then came a still small voice; on which the man enveloped his face in his mantle, and from that time knew what was the gospel, and what was grace.”

A diseased and melancholy man is apt to think that he has nearly every disease. He takes up a medical work to search for *his* disease; he reads the symptoms of various complaints, and comes to the conclusion that he has a touch of them all. The condition of the preacher above described, I concluded was precisely my case. I had urged repentance upon others, but had never repented in a godly manner myself; I had insisted strenuously

for the new birth in others, but I had never experienced it; I had directed others to Christ, but I had never seen him by a living faith. These thoughts, and others like them, produced a settled gloom and melancholy upon my soul. I had no heart to pray, I was so utterly confounded. Nor had I the courage to investigate the subject, as I had just before this, intended. The adversary and "accuser of the brethren" assaulted me greatly at this point, and tantalized me with fiendish delight. "Where now is thy God? Where now are thy hopes and joys? Where are thy prospects of heaven? Pretty physician! laboring to heal others! Heal thyself."

For some two months, I remained in this state of fear and despondency, utterly unable to help myself, and without the ability or courage to apply to God for help. Thus, in March, 1851, I went to one of my churches, and after I had preached, went home with a good brother, who, after he had conversed with me awhile, remarked that a colporteur had left some tracts at his house, one of which he was much pleased with, and he would hunt it up and let me read it. It pleased me much, for I preferred any thing to conversa-

tion, and solitude was my choice. The tract to which he alluded seemed to be misplaced, and while in search of it, he handed me another, with the remark, "this is a very good one, which you can look at while I search for the other." I had always regarded tracts with comparative indifference, but I received it from the good brother, and vastly preferred it to conversation. I found it to be "THE CONVERSION OF PRESIDENT EDWARDS." I concluded that a tract written by the great and the good Jonathan Edwards, "containing a sketch of his early religious history, and the distinguishing operations of the Spirit in his progress in the divine life," could and should interest any man. I read it with deeper, and with far different emotions, than I had ever read any other human production. I hope the reader will not consider it vain and egotistic in me, to publish a production of that great divine and metaphysician, in this narrative. It is an important link in my experience, and was so instrumental in its production, that it cannot well be passed over. Besides, I cannot do my readers a better service than to give them the tract entire.

CONVERSION
OF
PRESIDENT EDWARDS,

FROM A NARRATIVE WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

I had a variety of concerns and exercises about my soul from my childhood; but had two more remarkable seasons of awakening, before I met with that change by which I was brought to those new dispositions, and that new sense of things, that I have since had. The first time was when I was a boy, some years before I went to college, at a time of remarkable awakening in my father's congre-

NOTE.—President Edwards was born at Windsor, Con., October 5, 1703; graduated at Yale College, September, 1720; preached in New York, eight months in 1722–3; was appointed tutor at Yale College, September, 1724; ordained at Northampton, Mass., February 15, 1727; dismissed, June 22, 1750; stationed as a missionary to the Indians at Stockbridge, August, 1751; where he wrote his Treatise on the Will; elected President of New Jersey College, October, 1757; died March, 1758, aged 54. The above account of his religious exercises was found among his papers at his death, and is supposed to have been written at Northampton, when he was about forty years of age, for his own private advantage.

gation. I was then very much affected for many months, and concerned about the things of religion, and my soul's salvation; and was abundant in duties. I used to pray five times a day in secret, and to spend much time in religious talk with other boys; and used to meet with them to pray together. I experienced I know not what kind of delight in religion. My mind was much engaged in it, and had much self-righteous pleasure; and it was my delight to abound in religious duties. I with some of my school-mates joined together, and built a booth in a swamp, in a very retired spot, for a place of prayer. And besides, I had particular secret places of my own in the woods, where I used to retire by myself; and was from time to time much affected. My affections seemed to be lively and easily moved, and I seemed to be in my element when engaged in religious duties. And I am ready to think, many are deceived with such affections, and such a kind of delight as I then had in religion, and mistake it for grace.

But in process of time, my convictions and affections wore off; and I entirely lost all those affections and delights and left off secret

prayer, at least as to any constant performance of it; and returned like a dog to his vomit, and went on in the ways of sin. Indeed I was at times very uneasy, especially towards the latter part of my time at college; when it pleased God to seize me with a pleurisy, in which he brought me nigh to the grave, and shook me over the pit of hell. And yet, it was not long after my recovery, before I fell again into my old ways of sin. But God would not suffer me to go on with any quietness; I had great and violent inward struggles, till after many conflicts with wicked inclinations, repeated resolutions, and bonds that I laid myself under, by a kind of vows to God, I was brought wholly to break off all former wicked ways, and all ways of known outward sin; and to apply myself to seek salvation, and practice many religious duties; but without that kind of affection and delight which I had formerly experienced. My concern now wrought more by inward struggles and conflicts, and self-reflections. I made seeking my salvation the main business of my life. But yet, it seems to me, I sought after a miserable manner; which has made me sometimes since

to question, whether ever it issued in that which was saving: being ready to doubt, whether such miserable seeking ever succeeded. I was indeed brought to seek salvation in a manner that I never was before; I felt a spirit to part with all things in the world, for an interest in Christ. My concern continued and prevailed, with many exercising thoughts and inward struggles; but yet it never seemed to be proper to express that concern by the name of terror.

From my childhood up, my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased; leaving them eternally to perish, and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me. But I remember the time very well, when I seemed to be convinced, and fully satisfied, as to this sovereignty of God, and his justice in thus eternally disposing of men, according to his sovereign pleasure. But I never could give an account how, or by what means, I was thus convinced, not in the least imagining at the time, nor a long time after, that there was any ex-

traordinary influence of God's Spirit in it; but only that now I saw further, and my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it. However, my mind rested in it; and it put an end to all those cavils and objections. And there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind, with respect to the doctrine of God's sovereignty, from that day to this; so that I scarce ever have found so much as the rising of an objection against it, in the most absolute sense, in God's showing mercy to whom he will show mercy, and hardening whom he will. God's absolute sovereignty and justice, with respect to salvation and damnation, is what my mind seems to rest assured of, as much as of any thing that I see with my eyes; at least it is so at times. But I have often, since that first conviction, had quite another kind of sense of God's sovereignty than I had then. I have often since had, not only a conviction, but a delightful conviction. The doctrine has very often appeared exceeding pleasant, bright and sweet. Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. But my first conviction was not so.

The first instance that I remember of that

sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was on reading those words, 1 Tim. i. 17, *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen.* As I read the words, there came into my soul, and was as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from any thing I ever experienced before. Never any words of Scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought with myself, how excellent a Being that was, and how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be rapt up to him in heaven, and be as it were swallowed up in him forever! I kept saying, and as it were singing over these words of Scripture to myself; and went to pray to God that I might enjoy him, and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do; with a new sort of affection. But it never came into my thought, that there was any thing spiritual, or of a saving nature, in this.

From about that time, I began to have a new kind of apprehension and idea of Christ, and the work of redemption, and the glorious

way of salvation by him. An inward, sweet sense of these things, at times, came into my heart; and my soul was led away in pleasant views and contemplations of them. And my mind was greatly engaged to spend my time in reading and meditating on Christ, on the beauty and excellency of his person, and the lovely way of salvation by free grace in him. I found no books so delightful to me, as those that treated of these subjects. Those words, Cant. ii. 1, used to be abundantly with me, *I am the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valleys*. The words seemed to me, sweetly to represent the loveliness and beauty of Jesus Christ. The whole book of Canticles used to be pleasant to me, and I used to be much in reading it, about that time; and found, from time to time, an inward sweetness, that would carry me away, in my contemplations. This I know not how to express otherwise, than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and sometimes a kind of vision or fixed ideas and imaginations, of being alone in the mountains, or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and rapt and swallowed up

in God. The sense I had of divine things, would often of a sudden kindle up, as it were, a sweet burning in my heart; an ardor of soul, that I know not how to express.

Not long after I first began to experience these things, I gave an account to my father of some things that had passed in my mind. I was pretty much affected by the discourse we had together; and when the discourse was ended, I walked abroad alone, in a solitary place in my father's pasture, for contemplation. And as I was walking there, and looking up on the sky and clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious *majesty* and *grace* of God, that I know not how to express. I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction; majesty and meekness joined together; it was a sweet, and gentle, and holy majesty; and also a majestic meekness; an awful sweetness; a high, and great, and holy gentleness.

After this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of every thing was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet

cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost every thing. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in every thing; in the sun, and moon and stars; in the clouds, and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water, and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon for continuance; and in the day, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the mean time, singing forth, with a low voice, my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer. And scarce any thing, among all the works of nature, was so sweet to me as thunder and lightning; formerly, nothing had been so terrible to me. Before, I used to be uncommonly terrified with thunder, and to be struck with terror when I saw a thunder storm rising; but now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God, so to speak, at the first appearance of a thunder storm; and used to take the opportunity at such times, to fix myself in order to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder, which oftentimes was exceedingly entertain-

ing, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God. While thus engaged, it always seemed natural to me to sing, or chant for my meditations; or, to speak my thoughts in soliloquies with a singing voice.

I felt then great satisfaction, as to my good state; but that did not content me. I had vehement longings of soul after God and Christ, and after more holiness, wherewith my heart seemed to be full, and ready to break; which often brought to my mind the words of the Psalmist, Psal. cxix. 28, *My soul breaketh for the longing it hath*. I often felt a mourning and lamenting in my heart, that I had not turned to God sooner, that I might have had more time to grow in grace. My mind was greatly fixed on divine things; almost perpetually in the contemplation of them. I spent most of my time in thinking of divine things, year after year; often walking alone in the woods, and solitary places, for meditation, soliloquy and prayer, and converse with God; and it was always my manner, at such times, to sing forth my contemplations. I was almost constantly in ejaculatory prayer, wherever I was. Prayer seemed to be natural to me

as the breath by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent. The delights which I now felt in the things of religion, were of an exceeding different kind from those before mentioned, that I had when a boy; and what I then had no more notion of, than one born blind has of pleasant and beautiful colors. They were of a more inward, pure, soul-animating and refreshing nature. Those former delights never reached the heart; and did not arise from any sight of the divine excellency of the things of God; or any taste of the soul-satisfying and life-giving good there is in them.

My sense of divine things seemed gradually to increase, until I went to preach at New York, which was about a year and a half after they began, and while I was there I felt them, very sensibly, in a much higher degree than I had before. My longings after God and holiness were much increased. Pure and humble holy and heavenly Christianity, appeared exceeding amiable to me. I felt a burning desire to be in every thing a complete Christian; and conformed to the blessed image of Christ; and that I might live, in all things, according to the pure, sweet and blessed rules of the gospel. I had an eager thirsting after pro-

gress in these things; which put me upon pursuing and pressing after them. It was my continual strife, day and night, and constant inquiry, how I should *be* more holy and *live* more holily, and more becoming a child of God and a disciple of Christ. I now sought an increase of grace and holiness, and a holy life, with much more earnestness than ever I sought grace before I had it. I used to be continually examining myself, and studying and contriving for likely ways and means how I should live holily, with far greater diligence and earnestness than ever I pursued any thing in my life; but yet with too great a dependance on my own strength, which afterwards proved a great damage to me. My experience had not then taught me, as it has done since, my extreme feebleness and impotence, every manner of way, and the bottomless depths of secret corruption and deceit there was in my heart. However, I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness and conformity to Christ.

The heaven I desired was a heaven of holiness: to be with God, and to spend my eternity in divine love and holy communion with

Christ. My mind was very much taken up with contemplations on heaven and the enjoyments there, and living there in perfect holiness, humility and love; and it used at that time to appear a great part of the happiness of heaven, that there the saints could express their love to Christ. It appeared to me a great clog and burden, that what I felt within I could not express as I desired. The inward ardor of my soul seemed to be hindered and pent up, and could not freely flame out as it would. I used often to think how in heaven this principle should freely and fully vent and express itself. Heaven appeared exceedingly delightful, as a world of love; and that all happiness consisted in living in pure, humble, heavenly, divine love.

I remember the thoughts I used then to have of holiness, and said sometimes to myself, "I do certainly know that I love holiness, such as the gospel prescribes." It appeared to me that there was nothing in it but what was ravishingly lovely; the highest beauty and amiableness—a *divine* beauty; far purer than any thing here upon earth; and that every thing else was like mire and defilement in comparison of it.

Holiness, as I then wrote down some of my contemplations on it, appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature; which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness, and ravishment to the soul. In other words, that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers; all pleasant, delightful, and undisturbed; enjoying a sweet calm and the gently vivifying beams of the sun. The soul of a true Christian, as I then wrote my meditations, appeared like such a little white flower as we see in the spring of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing, as it were, in a calm rapture; diffusing around a sweet fragranciness; standing peacefully and lovingly in the midst of other flowers round about; all in like manner opening their bosoms to drink in the light of the sun. There was no part of creature holiness, that I had so great a sense of its loveliness, as humility, brokenness of heart, and poverty of spirit; and there was nothing that I so earnestly longed for. My heart panted after this: to lie low before God,

as in the dust; that I might be nothing, and that God might be ALL; that I might become as a little child.

While at New York I was sometimes much affected with reflections on my past life, considering how late it was before I began to be truly religious; and how wickedly I had lived till then; and once so, as to weep abundantly, and for a considerable time together.

On January 12, 1723, I made a solemn dedication of myself to God, and wrote it down: giving up myself, and all I had to God; to be for the future in no respect my own; to act as one that had no right to himself, in any respect; and solemnly vowed to take God for my whole portion and felicity; looking on nothing else as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were; and his law for the constant rule of my obedience; engaging to fight, with all my might, against the world, the flesh, and the devil, to the end of my life. But I have reason to be infinitely humbled when I consider how much I have failed of answering my obligations.

I had then abundance of sweet religious conversation in the family where I lived, with

Mr. John Smith and his pious mother. My heart was knit in affection to those in whom were appearances of true piety; and I could bear the thoughts of no other companions but such as were holy, and the disciples of the blessed Jesus. I had great longings for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world; and my secret prayer used to be, in great part taken up in praying for it. If I heard the least hint of any thing that happened, in any part of the world, that appeared, in some respect or other, to have a favorable aspect on the interests of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly caught at it, and it would much animate and refresh me. I used to be eager to read public news letters, mainly for that end; to see if I could not find some news favorable to the interests of religion in the world.

I very frequently used to retire into a solitary place, on the banks of Hudson's river, at some distance from the city, for contemplation on divine things, and secret converse with God; and had many sweet hours there. Sometimes Mr. Smith and I walked there together, to converse on the things of God; and our conversation used to turn much on the advance-

ment of Christ's kingdom in the world, and the glorious things that God would accomplish for his church in the latter days. I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the holy scriptures of any book whatsoever.— Oftentimes, in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart. I felt a harmony between something in my heart and those sweet and and powerful words. I seemed often to see so much light exhibited by every sentence, and such a refreshing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading; often dwelling long on one sentence, to see the wonders contained in it; and yet almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders.

I came away from New York in the month of April, 1723, and had a most bitter parting with Madam Smith and her son. My heart seemed to sink within me at leaving the family and city where I had enjoyed so many sweet and pleasant days. I went from New York to Wethersfield by water, and as I sailed away, I kept sight of the city as long as I could. However, that night after this sorrowful parting, I was greatly comforted in God at Westchester, where we went ashore to

lodge, and had a pleasant time of it all the voyage to Saybrook. It was sweet to me to think of meeting dear Christians in heaven, where we should never part more. At Saybrook we went ashore to lodge on Saturday, and there kept the Sabbath, where I had a sweet and refreshing season, walking alone in the fields.

After I came home to Windsor, I remained much in a like frame of mind as when at New York, only sometimes I felt my heart ready to sink with the thoughts of my friends at New York. My support was in contemplations on the heavenly state, as I find in my Diary of May 1, 1723. It was a comfort to think of that state where there is fulness of joy; where reigns heavenly, calm and delightful love, without alloy; where there are continually the dearest expressions of this love; where is the enjoyment of the persons loved, without ever parting; where those persons who appear so lovely in this world, will really be inexpressibly more lovely and full of love to us. And how sweetly will the mutual lovers join together to sing the praises of God and the Lamb! How will it fill us with joy to think

that this enjoyment, these sweet exercises, will never cease, but will last to all eternity!

I continued much in the same frame, in the general, as when at New York, till I went to New Haven as tutor to the college, particularly once at Bolton, on a journey from Boston, while walking out alone in the fields. After I went to New Haven I sunk in religion, my mind being diverted from my eager pursuits after holiness by some affairs that greatly perplexed and distracted my thoughts.

In September, 1725, I was taken ill at New Haven, and while endeavoring to go home to Windsor, was so ill at the North Village that I could go no further, where I lay sick for about a quarter of a year. In this sickness God was pleased to visit me again with the sweet influences of his Spirit. My mind was greatly engaged there in divine, pleasant contemplations and longings of soul. I observed that those who watched with me, would often be looking out wishfully for the morning, which brought to my mind those words of the Psalmist, and which my soul, with delight, made its own language, *My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning,*

I say, more than they that watch for the morning; and when the light of day came in at the windows it refreshed my soul from one morning to another. It seemed to be some image of the light of God's glory.

I remember, about that time, I used greatly to long for the conversion of some that I was concerned with; I could gladly honor them, and with delight be a servant to them, and lie at their feet, if they were but truly holy. But some time after this I was again greatly diverted in my mind with some temporal concerns that exceedingly took up my thoughts greatly to the wounding of my soul, and went on through various exercises that it would be tedious to relate, which gave me much more experience of my own heart than ever I had before.

Since I came to this town,* I have often had sweet complacency in God, in views of his glorious perfections and the excellency of Jesus Christ. God has appeared to me a glorious and lovely Being, chiefly on the account of his holiness. The holiness of God has al-

* Northampton.

ways appeared to me the most lovely of all his attributes. The doctrines of God's absolute sovereignty, and free grace, in showing mercy to whom he would show mercy; and man's absolute dependence on the operations of God's Holy Spirit, have very often appeared to me as sweet and glorious doctrines. These doctrines have been much my delight. God's sovereignty has ever appeared to me, great part of his glory. It has often been my delight to approach God, and adore him as a sovereign God, and ask sovereign mercy of him.

I have loved the doctrines of the gospel; they have been to my soul like green pastures. The gospel has seemed to me the richest treasure; the treasure that I have most desired, and longed that it might dwell richly in me. The way of salvation by Christ has appeared, in a general way, glorious and excellent, most pleasant and most beautiful. It has often seemed to me, that it would in a great measure spoil heaven, to receive it in any other way. That text has often been affecting and delightful to me, Isa. xxxii: 2—*A man shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, etc.*

It has often appeared to me delightful, to be united to Christ; to have him for my head, and to be a member of his body; also to have Christ for my teacher and prophet. I very often think with sweetness and longings and pantings of soul, of being a little child, taking hold of Christ, to be led by him through the wilderness of this world. That text, Matt. xviii: 3, has often been sweet to me, *Except ye be converted, and become as little children,* etc. I love to think of coming to Christ, to receive salvation from him, poor in spirit, and quite empty of self, humbly exalting him alone; cut off entirely from my own root, in order to grow into, and out of Christ; to have God in Christ to be all in all; and to live by faith on the Son of God, a life of humble, unfeigned confidence in him. That scripture has often been sweet to me, Psal. cxv: 1, *Not unto us. O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*— And those words of Christ, Luke x: 21, *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so,*

Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. That sovereignty of God which Christ rejoiced in, seemed to me worthy of such joy; and that rejoicing seemed to show the excellency of Christ, and of what spirit he was.

Sometimes, only mentioning a single word caused my heart to burn within me; or only seeing the name of Christ, or the name of some attribute of God. And God has appeared glorious to me, on account of the Trinity. It has made me have exalting thoughts of God, that he subsists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The sweetest joys and delights I have experienced, have not been those that have arisen from a hope of my own good estate; but in a direct view of the glorious things of the gospel. When I enjoy this sweetness, it seems to carry me above the thoughts of my own estate; it seems at such times a loss that I cannot bear, to take off my eye from the glorious, pleasant object I behold without me, to turn my eye in upon myself, and my own good estate.

My heart has been much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. The histories of the past advancement of Christ's

kingdom have been sweet to me. When I have read histories of past ages, the pleasantest thing in all my reading has been, to read of the kingdom of Christ being promoted. And when I have expected, in my reading, to come to any such thing, I have rejoiced in the prospect, all the way as I read. And my mind has been much entertained and delighted with the scripture promises and prophecies, which relate to the future glorious advancement of Christ's kingdom upon earth.

I have sometimes had a sense of the excellent fulness of Christ, and his meetness and suitableness as a Saviour; whereby he has appeared to me, far above all, the chief of ten thousands. His blood and atonement have appeared sweet, and his righteousness sweet; which was always accompanied with ardency of spirit; and inward strugglings and breathings, and groanings that cannot be uttered, to be emptied of myself, and swallowed up in Christ.

Once, as I rode out into the woods for my health, in 1737, having alighted from my horse in a retired place, as my manner commonly has been, to walk for divine contempla-

tion and prayer, I had a view that for me was extraordinary, of the glory of the Son of God, as Mediator between God and man, and his wonderful, great, full, pure and sweet grace and love, and meek and gentle condescension. This grace that appeared so calm and sweet, appeared also great above the heavens. The person of Christ appeared ineffably excellent with an excellency great enough to swallow up all thought and conception—which continued, as near as I can judge, about an hour; which kept me the greater part of the time in a flood of tears, and weeping aloud. I felt an ardency of soul to be, what I knew not otherwise how to express, emptied and annihilated; to lie in the dust, and to be full of Christ alone; to love him with a holy and pure love; to trust in him; to live upon him; to serve and follow him; and to be perfectly sanctified and made pure, with a divine and heavenly purity.

I have, several other times, had views of very much the same nature, and which have had the same effects.

I have many times had a sense of the glory of the third person in the Trinity, in his office of Sanctifier; in his holy operations, commu-

nicating divine light and life to the soul. God, in the communications of his Holy Spirit, has appeared as an infinite fountain of divine glory and sweetness; being full, and sufficient to fill and satisfy the soul; pouring forth itself in sweet communications; like the sun in its glory, sweetly and pleasantly diffusing light and life. And I have sometimes had an affecting sense of the excellency of the word of God, as a word of life; as the light of life; a sweet, excellent, life-giving word; accompanied with a thirsting after that word, that it might dwell richly in my heart.

Often, since I lived in this town, I have had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness; very frequently to such a degree, as to hold me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together; so that I have often been forced to shut myself up. I have had a vastly greater sense of my own wickedness, and the badness of my heart, than ever I had before my conversion.* It

* Our author does not say, that he *had* more wickedness and badness of heart, since his conversion, than he had before; but that he had a greater *sense* thereof.— Thus a blind man may *have* his garden *full* of noxious

has often appeared to me, that if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the very worst of all mankind; of all that have been since the beginning of the world to this time; and that I should have by far the lowest place in hell. When others, that have come to talk with me about their soul concerns, have expressed the sense they have of their own wickedness, by saying that it seemed to them, that they were as bad as the devil himself; I thought their expressions seemed exceeding faint and feeble, to represent my wickedness.

My wickedness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me perfectly ineffable, and swallowing up all thought and imagination; like an infinite deluge, or mountains over my head. I know not how to express better what my

weeds; and yet not *see* or be *sensible* of them. But should the garden be in great part cleared of these, and furnished with many beautiful and salutary plants; and supposing the owner now to have the power of discriminating objects of sight; in this case, he would *have* less, but would *see*, and have a *sense* of more. To which may be added, that the better the organ, and clearer the light may be, the stronger will be the *sense* excited by sin or holiness.

sins appear to me to be, than by heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite. Very often, for these many years, these expressions are in my mind, and in my mouth; "Infinite upon infinite—Infinite upon infinite!" When I look into my heart, and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell. And it appears to me, that were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fulness and glory of the great Jehovah, and the arm of his power and grace stretched forth in all the majesty of his power, and in all the glory of his sovereignty, I should appear sunk down in my sins, below hell itself; far beyond the sight of every thing, but the eye of sovereign grace, that can pierce even down to such a depth. And yet it seems to me, that my conviction of sin is exceeding small and faint; it is enough to amaze me, that I have no more sense of my sin. I know certainly, that I have very little sense of my sinfulness. When I have had turns of weeping for my sins, I thought I knew at the time, that my repentance was nothing to my sin.

I have greatly longed of late for a broken heart, and to lie low before God; and, when

I ask for humility, I cannot bear the thoughts of being no more humble than other Christians. It seems to me, that though their degrees of humility may be suitable for them, yet it would be a vile self-exaltation in me, not to be the lowest in humility of all mankind. Others speak of their longing to be "humbled in the dust;" that may be a proper expression for them, but I always think of myself, that I ought, and it is an expression that has long been natural for me to use in prayer, "to lie infinitely low before God." And it is affecting to think, how ignorant I was, when a young Christian, of the bottomless, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy and deceit, left in my heart.

I have a much greater sense of my universal, exceeding dependence on God's grace and strength, and mere good pleasure, of late, than I used formerly to have; and have experienced more of an abhorrence of my own righteousness. The very thought of any joy arising in me, on any consideration of my own amiableness, performances, or experiences, or or any goodness of heart or life, is nauseous and detestable to me. And yet I am greatly afflicted with a proud and self-righteous spi-

rit, much more sensibly than I used to be formerly. I see that serpent rising and putting forth its head continually, everywhere all around me.

Though it seems to me, that, in some respects, I was a far better Christian, for two or three years after my first conversion, than I am now; and lived in a more constant delight and pleasure; yet of late years, I have had a more full and constant sense of the absolute sovereignty of God, and a delight in that sovereignty; and have had more of a sense of the glory of Christ, as a Mediator revealed in the gospel. On one Saturday night, in particular I had such a discovery of the excellency of the gospel above all other doctrines, that I could not but say to myself, "This is my chosen light, my chosen doctrine;" and of Christ, "This is my chosen Prophet." It appeared sweet, beyond all expression, to follow Christ, and to be taught and enlightened and instructed by him; to learn of him, and live to him.— Another Saturday night (*January, 1739*) I had such a sense, how sweet and blessed a thing it was to walk in the way of duty; to do that which was right and meet to be done, and agreeable to the holy mind of God; that it caused

me to break forth into a kind of loud weeping which held me some time, so that I was forced to shut myself up, and fasten the doors. I could not but, as it were, cry out, "How happy are they which do that which is right in the sight of God! They are blessed indeed, they are the happy ones!" I had, at the same time, a very affecting sense, how meet and suitable it was that God should govern the world, and order all things according to his own pleasure; and I rejoiced in it, that God reigned, and that his will was done.

When I was through reading the foregoing narrative, I came to the following conclusion: *I am either an unconverted man, or I have not attained to the heights and depths, lengths and breadths of piety and spirituality, to which Mr. Edwards attained; and, in either event, I must and will bestir myself, and attend to it from this moment.* The good brother's favorite tract was not found, but the one which the Lord designed for me had done its work. I formed the resolution above-mentioned, with more strength than usual; and felt that I had some assistance in its formation. And with it, also, came

a spirit of prayer, and some tenderness of heart and contrition of spirit. Before this my heart was hard as a stone, as dead and as cold.

Lest some of the family should speak to me, and in order to strengthen my soul in its resolution, I retired to the grove, and prostrated myself before God in prayer. Upon my face in the dust I covenanted with God, that by his help I would become a converted man, if I was not already such; and if the investigation proved that I was a true believer in Jesus, I would strive to attain to the full assurance of faith, hope and love, so that I should not forever be tossed to and fro, and driven by every thing that crossed my pathway. I had some freedom in prayer, and some faith in God that the matter would terminate one way or the other, soon. I covenanted also, that I would receive comfort from no human source. I returned to the house; read the Word of God, conversed some with the family, and after prayer retired to my room with my mind greatly excited, and prayed often during the night.

Next morning, I felt grateful that God had

not cut me off in such a state of doubt and uncertainty in regard to my spiritual condition. I betook myself to the grove, and remained there the most of the time till the hour to go to the house of God. Preaching under certain circumstances has often been a great cross, but I do not remember it to have ever been as heavy before. I will leave the reader to imagine my feelings in attempting to preach in such a state of mind. After services, I went home, strengthened in my resolution to carry out the pledges I had so solemnly made to my God and Saviour Jesus Christ. I went into a secret place that I had fixed upon as my place for evening prayer; and there, with the best heart that God was pleased to give me, I poured it out before the mercy seat of the GREAT KING. But no relief came, after much time being spent in that solemn manner. Next day, early in the morning, I selected a place in the grove for prayer and meditation, and offered up my morning sacrifice; but no answer came. At noon, the same place was resorted to, with the same poor success. At night, I went to the other consecrated spot, but no response came from the mercy seat.

In addition to these set hours, morning, noon and night, for prayer, I often added other hours and moments, according to the anxiety I felt, and the opportunities I had from my pressing worldly engagements. The NEW TESTAMENT and PSALMS I generally carried with me at my times of retirement. In that book I always read some portions before and after prayer, which I thought were most applicable to my case. The result of all these efforts in secret, was an increase of anxiety upon the subject of my soul's salvation. I obtained no relief from them. My fears of being in a deceived and unconverted state increased daily. The holiness and purity of God, and the rigid demands of his law were revealed to my mind, as well as my depraved nature, my sinful and vile heart. Such views disheartened me greatly. But what should I do? Look in whatever direction I might, I was always shut up to one inflexible conclusion—*I must be reconciled to that God of infinite holiness.* But how was it to be done? was the perplexing question. True; I knew what the scriptures said on the subject; I believed it to some extent, and had taught it to others; but

to understand it, see it, believe it, experience it, and have it written and engraven on my heart, so as to know it, and settle the question as to my acceptance with God, beyond all doubt, was what I prayed for and sought. Nothing less than this, was I humbly bent on obtaining.

Saturdays and Sundays were days I always dreaded. My reluctance to preach increased every week—every day, I may add. My reluctance to preach increased in proportion to the increase of my doubts and fears. But I resolved to preach, if for no other reason than to keep my condition from the public. When Sunday night came, and my imperfect labors were ended, I felt relieved of a burden of anxiety that had preyed upon my soul, in a telling manner, during all the services. My anxiety to know what to say to the people before I began, my concern as to its effects upon them, and the ever-abiding concern for my own soul, were efforts of mind quite trying upon my nervous system. After my Sabbath night's secret prayer, and I had retired to rest, my soul was so wrought upon with shame and mortification, at my efforts in

preaching, and at my doubtful and uncertain condition before God, that rest and sleep departed from me. Monday was a day of languor, dullness and lassitude of body and mind—a day of reproaches, settled gloom and horrid melancholy.

About the middle of April, 1851, a ministering brother opened a correspondence with me on the subject of going with him to the Southern Triennial Convention, to meet in Nashville, Tennessee, in May following. He believed it in my power to go, and, therefore, urged it as duty. In my first reply I evaded his reasons for my going, for I disliked company of any kind, and gave such excuses as my conscience would allow, for it was very tender. But my excuses were not satisfactory, and I was compelled to open my mind to him, to a great extent, before he would be satisfied. This I reluctantly did in a letter under date of April 22nd, 1851. As an extract from this letter will give the reader a better idea of my state of mind at that time than I possibly can at this date, I will give it, though not written with the least expectation that it would ever be published, or even be

seen by any other person. After giving some reasons of a worldly nature, I approached the real cause, and said:

“You complain much of my not writing oftener. If you knew my state of mind, I know you would not blame me. I have had but little inclination to write on any subject for a good while past. The little I have to write that would interest you, I could soon write, and indeed have written it; but the subject upon which my heart dwells mostly, I fear would not interest you, or you might think I was foolish, melancholy, and in danger of the asylum. I will, however, venture to lay it somewhat before you, to enlist your sympathies; for if any man on earth needs your sympathies and prayers, I am that man. Do not, I beseech you, treat my case with indifference; pour no cold water on “the smoking flax,” nor break the “bruised reed,” but fan it to a flame if possible, and bind up and support the broken reed.

“Dropping figures, I am still, as I have often hinted to you, greatly troubled in spirit about my spiritual condition before God. Strange as it may appear to you, I greatly

fear, half my time, that I am not a converted man. It has destroyed my energy of mind very much, and has prevented me from writing articles for the press, and from corresponding privately with my friends on religious subjects; and, on mere literary subjects, I have not had sufficient interest to even touch them. I have feared to mention my case to any of my brethren; lest they, from the good opinion they have of me, should advise me to stop the investigation, and by that means settle me down in carnal security, and I should thereby lose my soul. And further, I do not believe that any one can settle that question for me; the Lord alone can decide it. My condition I regard as a peculiar one. I cannot pray in what I consider prayer; I cannot repent in what I regard to be repentance; I cannot believe in the scriptural sense of that term; I cannot love God with my whole heart, as he should be loved by a rational being; I cannot *feel*, nor do anything that a Christian ought to do, to glorify God. My heart is as hard as a stone, and a tear never falls from my eyes; the fountains of my soul are dried up; my soul is full of darkness and horror; and

the Spirit of God seems to have forsaken me, and left me to grope my way in the dark, the balance of my days. 'Wo is me! for I am undone.' I get no relief from any source, nor in any service.

"I am like a sick person who reads a medical book, when I read the bible. The sick patient has every disease described by medical authors; so it is with me when I read the Word of God. I take up that sacred volume, and instead of being comforted by it, I am Esau, who sold his birthright for the trifling sum of a 'mess of pottage.' But that won't do, for Esau 'lifted up his voice, and wept,' but I cannot weep. Then I am Saul, who had 'another heart' given him, but not a *new heart*, and was 'among the prophets,' and died at last under the curse of God. Then again I am Balaam, who felt and predicted his own doom, when he said, 'I shall see him, but not nigh; I shall behold him, but not now.' He beheld Christ at a distance, but did not by faith bring him nigh, and died in unrighteousness. I awfully fear that is my state, and will be my doom. I then think of Jehu, and immediately I am transformed into Jehu. He was zealous against the house of

Ahab, for promoting the worship of Baal, but he was a devotee to Jeroboam's calves at Bethel. Jehu was zealous against one sin, and in love with another. I am somewhat zealous for God, but my unconverted state (as I fear,) neutralizes every thing I do, and in the end I fear it will be no better with me than it was with the son of Nimshi. Soon again I am one of Habakkuk's men, who 'sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense to their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.' I look back upon my past religious life with just censure and condemnation. I fear I have all the time sacrificed to my own vile, selfish net and drag, and have not had the glory of God in view, in my own salvation and in the salvation of others. O how full of selfishness and vanity I am! I then go to the New Testament, and I am the 'stony ground hearer;' one of the 'five foolish virgins;' but one of my most alarming fears is, that I am one of those who will approach the Lord in that day, and say, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?' and to whom

the Lord will say, 'I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity.'

"But I will give you no more analogies between my case and cases in the Bible; space will not allow, nor would your patience, (already, I fear, taxed too long) bear it. I fear, upon the whole, that I have only the form of godliness, without its energy and power. My theology, religion and all, are only in my head, not written and graven on my heart, by the power of the Holy Spirit. I am (drawing analogies again) like Nebuchadnezzar's image, in the plain of Dura: I have a golden head, but my feet, miry clay, a cold, stupid image. It is all I fear, the work of natural conscience, and an understanding enlightened by the letter of the word of God. Before a holy God, I stand as a mass of moral putridity and vileness. There is no life in my preaching, praying nor singing; I try to do all, but it is a useless and unacceptable sacrifice. I have told you of but little of what I feel. Pen, ink and paper, (nor could the tongue, if I were present) cannot describe my bitter anguish. Now imagine a man in this condition, and as hard as a rock; and you have my religious

state at this time. Whatever I do in the exercise of religious duties, is done from the promptings of judgment, and not from my feelings. God knows, I thought I was a converted man, when I joined the church and entered the christian ministry; and I have the consolation of knowing that I did not intrude upon his courts through impure motives; so I shall remain where I am and in my work, till the matter is decided. I tell no one of it, because it would not edify, and might dishearten God's dear children.

“Pray for me, dear brother, until the day break, and the shadows flee away.”

Soon after I wrote the above, I procured and read a small work entitled THE ALMOST CHRISTIAN DISCOVERED; OR, THE FALSE PROFESSOR TRIED AND CAST. This heart-searching, and self-righteous-killing book, had well nigh exterminated what little hope was left me. As Job's comforters were to him, so it was to me, “a miserable comforter indeed.” It served me as the watchman did the spouse in the song of Solomon: it “smote me and wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.” It showed in a variety of ways, what a

man might do and say, and yet be, but *almost* a Christian. I read it through with but little intermission; and my distress of soul was intense. Thought I, this little book was placed in my hands by the providence of God to convince me clearly that I am not a Christian—only one of the *almost* Christians. It served me worse than the “thieves” did the poor man that was “going from Jerusalem down to Jerico.” They “stripped him, and wounded him, and left him half dead;” it stripped me quite clean of my self righteousness and good works, exposed my nakedness of soul, and left me more than “half dead,” I feared worse than the unfortunate man in another respect: the good Samaritan came along, bound up *his* wounds, poured ointment into them, and took him “to an inn,” gave special charge concerning him, and had it charged to his own account. I had none to help me. The holiness of God repulsed me when I thought of approaching him; his rigid law cursed me; I had lost my former dim sight of Christ and his offices; the Holy Spirit had left me, and no one was able to administer any comfort.

There were some passages in the Psalms

that were peculiarly applicable to me. I was always reminded of them when I attempted to pray. Psalm xxii. 1-2, was constantly in my mind.—“My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season and am not silent.” Why the Psalmist called his words uttered in distress, “the words of my roaring,” I cannot tell; but my efforts in prayer at that time are well expressed by the word *roaring*. My efforts were made day and night; but I now regard them to have been nothing more than discordant “roaring,” produced by deep distress and anguish of spirit.

At this crisis in my narrative, I received a letter from my friend, Mr. H——, still urging me to accompany him to Nashville, Tenn., to the Convention. But I was less inclined to go than when I wrote the preceding letter. After giving several reasons why I could not, yet withholding the main one, I replied to a portion of his letter as follows:

“I see you have on account of my letter [the one just read] placed me in ‘DOUBTING

CASTLE.' Be it so; there is some comfort in that, if indeed you are correct; for CHRISTIAN and HOPEFUL succeeded ultimately in getting out, and pursued their journey to Mount Zion. But I have not, however, looked upon it so favorably; for I often fear that I am the "MAN IN THE IRON CAGE," who was doomed to utter despair. But I hope the Lord will soon show me, in mercy and grace, *who* I am, and *what* I am. If my heart deceives me not, (which alas! it has often done) there is nothing I desire more at this time. But how fleeting are our convictions and desires on a subject so momentous! I have often been waked up to investigate my spiritual state before God, but have as often fallen back again into a careless state. If I were sure it was the tempter or the accuser, as you suggest, I would say in the strength of God, 'Get behind me, Satan.' But what if it is the good Spirit, either showing me my deceived state, or stirring me up to seek after more holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord? I have a strong conviction that it is the Spirit of the Lord at work with me.

"We cannot be too thorough in self-examination; ministers as well as private members.

Of the two, I do not know but it is easier for a minister of the gospel to be deceived than a private member. The minister takes it for granted that he is a Christian, from the fact that he *is* a minister of the gospel of Christ; Christians take it for granted that he is and so do men of the world, and conduct themselves towards him as such, and by these means he is tempted to think well of himself, and is in great danger of spiritual pride and carnal security. And further, he reads the word of God, and searches other books to find out *what* to say to others, and, being so intent upon his calling, he forgets to let them speak *first* of all to his own heart. Now, what if he were deceived, at first? Is he not in imminent danger? Nay, is not his damnation almost certain? I presume it will be such that will say in the judgment, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name,' &c. May God have mercy upon me, and save me from being one of that number! for says Christ, 'they will be many.' Among the twelve, there was a Judas, and when the Lord said, 'that one of you shall betray me,' they all honestly examined their hearts and exclaimed, 'Lord, is it I?' And I

see no reason, now, why there is not an equal proportion of graceless ministers in the world, and it is but meet that each one should inquire 'Is it I?' 'Search me, O God, and try me!'

"You suggest my usefulness in the Master's cause as an evidence in my favor. But to my mind, usefulness in the ministry is not a sufficient evidence of a minister being a converted man. God is sovereign; and he may use a man's gifts in bringing others to Christ, while he is a stranger himself, in heart, to the holy Gospel he preaches; and he may comfort and confirm others in the faith of which he is an utter stranger. The efficacy and power of the word of God upon the heart of the hearer, does not depend upon the authority of him who speaks it, but upon the power and authority of Him who blesses it. So, others may be converted and established in the faith of the gospel under my preaching; and I, in the end, may be 'cast away.' You know the raven was an unclean bird according to the statutes of Moses, yet God sent it to good Elijah, at the brook Cherith, with bread and flesh, good and clean, morning and evening. A very lame man may, with his crutch, direct you to the

highway, and not be able to walk in it one step himself. A crooked tailor may make a suit of clothes to fit a straight body, though it fit not him who made it. The church (Christ's garden enclosed) may be well watered through a wooden pump log; the sun may give light to the inmates through a dusky and dirty window; and a farm may be sowed by a dirty hand and produce a good crop. The above, I know, is a singular combination of figures, but to my mind they are quite suggestive.

But I must conclude. I have great confidence in your wisdom and piety; but you cannot comfort me. My case is beyond your reach. For the present you must allow me to sing in the minor key, till the Lord tunes my heart to sing in the major."

Shortly after this I purchased and read BOSTON'S FOURFOLD STATE OF HUMAN NATURE. The "Almost Christian," which I had read, revealed to me depths of hidden depravity that I had but imperfectly seen; and also showed me much more of my self-righteousness, vanity and folly, than I had ever seen before. But "Boston's Fourfold State," broke up and exposed to the light of day, the deep foundations

of sin and depravity in my soul; and the utter folly of seeking justification by the deeds of the law, which I was prone to do.

When I saw my depravity of heart, and sinfulness of soul in the light of the scriptures, I was cut off from *internal* reliance for help. I felt like Jeremiah when he was let down into the dungeon, and used his language often in my distress—"They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me. Waters flowed over my head; then I said I am cut off." The last vestige of self-righteousness torn from me, I stood a destitute, trembling sinner, before a holy God. For twenty years I had been looking for something to commend me to a righteous God; but I now saw that I was nothing more than a mass of moral putridity and vileness before his infinite holiness. My disappointment and mortification was great, when I saw my utter helplessness before an unchangeable God, and my righteousness condemned as "filthy rags," and cursed by his holy law. I looked back upon my past life with abhorrence—as a life of vanity and folly. I viewed every act that I had ever done—the best of them—as having their

foundation in selfishness and self-aggrandizement—the whole of it condemned by God's law. However men may have viewed my acts and deportment, as favorable evidences of my being a Christian; yet, when I compared them with infinite holiness and immaculate purity, measured them by the perfect standard of justice, and weighed them in the exact scales of the law, they were found to be lighter than vanity, and wanting to an infinite extent. My agitation of soul increased with these discoveries, and darkness and confusion overwhelmed me. The language of Isaiah, "wo is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts," was ringing in my soul continually.

As I saw increasing danger and necessity, I betook myself to more frequent prayer. I was, for weeks, almost an inhabitant of the woods. My soul loathed company. My prayers seemed utterly worthless. I soon lost all confidence in them myself, abhorred them, and was easily persuaded that God discarded them as an abomination. Yet pray I must, if it

amounted to nothing more than David's "roarings." And also, the plaintive language of Job, I made my own: "For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like waters." What little moisture my soul possessed in prayer, was now "turned into the drought of summer;" and "my bones had waxed old through my roaring all the day long."

Having lost confidence in the prayers indited by my own mind, I searched the Psalms and other portions of the Bible that contained prayers, bowed before God, and read them; tried to enter into their meaning and spirit, and make them my prayers. I concluded, if my prayers were nothing more than breath—confused, discordant "roarings"—that by using those indited by the Holy Spirit, there might be the energy and efficacy in them that I needed. But all appeared to result in nothing valuable. My distress and hopelessness increased every day. But all this I concealed from my family and friends. I did not wish them to know what was going on in my soul, lest gossip should report it to the friends and foes of Christ.

As it was God's work in my soul, one more book was necessary to turn me away from every other refuge, but Jesus; so that in after life it might ever be my boast, in this gracious work, "I saw no man, save Jesus only." The same kind Providence that placed the other works in my hands, soon put into my possession, FLAVEL'S TOUCHSTONE. This little volume did its work immediately. I finished reading it in the woods one day about two o'clock; and said in the language of David, "I am cut off from before thine eyes." And with Jeremiah, "My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord." I had now solved the difficult problem: *I am not a converted man; I am not a Christian.* I was dumb with horror. My heart was as hard as a rock; no prayer now escaped from my lips; no tears fell from my eyes.

After having been a member of the Church of Christ for twenty years, and a minister of the gospel for eighteen, to come to the conclusion, without one ray of light or gleam of hope, that one never was converted, produces feelings which neither tongue nor pen can adequately describe. I never had spent and

hope I never shall spend such another afternoon. David's language is not too strong for the feelings I then experienced. "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow." And like Jeremiah, I was "filled with bitterness, and made drunken with wormwood."

It now became necessary that I should decide upon my future course. Shall I continue to preach? was the first question for me to decide. Suggestions like the following were made to my mind: "Ought you to preach, knowing you are an unconverted man? Should you not go to your church, surrender your authority, and quit preaching, till you are converted? No man should preach unless he is converted and called; and you are neither converted, nor called to the work of the ministry." These were perplexing questions, and I responded to them as follows: That I should preach on, to the best of my ability, as though nothing had happened, and seek the salvation of my soul. God was my witness that I was no hypocrite; neither in my profession of faith, nor in preaching the gospel of Christ,

freely. That I was deceived, I then firmly believed; but the Adversary never could make any impression on my mind by accusing me of hypocrisy. Besides, thought I, if I lay down my ministry, the church will call on me for a reason, and that will reveal the whole matter to the world; I shall wound the cause of God, and dishearten his people. It was a good thing, I concluded, to preach the gospel, as I had commenced it in good faith, if I did know nothing of Christ experimentally, and I would continue to seek him with my whole heart. And further, I concluded as I had commenced preaching, in good faith to my Master, it would make my case no worse if I should continue it.

The same reasoning I applied to my connexion with the Church of Christ. I had no temptation, from the beginning of my late struggle up to this time, to cease my efforts and return to the world. Sin to me was exceedingly hateful all the time; and now in my darkest hour and greatest extremity, I had not even a suggestion to sin against God, and abandon the idea of seeking the salvation of my soul. My aim and wish was to be a

Christian—reconciled to, and at peace with God. And I then resolved, that by the help of God, I would seek the salvation of my soul as long as I should live, and never make it known to any one under heaven. I had a great horror at being “daubed with untempered mortar,” and of having “peace!” proclaimed to me “when there was no peace;” for if God was pleased to convert me, he would give me the spirituality of the New Testament, and then I would be at rest, happy and useful. In these feelings and determinations my soul was immovably fixed.

All that afternoon I spent in reflecting upon my past life. While I looked with “shame and confusion of face” at my sins, vanities, follies and short comings, yet I felt devout gratitude to God, for not having cut me off in my deceived state. It was a deep mystery with me why I had been deceived so long—why I had not seen before, that which was now so plain to my mind. I shuddered at the idea of my previous danger. I thanked God with the best heart I had, that he he had spared me, and had, in mercy and grace, given me to see my deceived state.

But what was to be done? "Pray," was the answer. But I had prayed; had used every form and posture of prayer. I had prayed in the language of the Psalms, and had used every prayer in the Bible in the least applicable to my case, and I had nothing new now to offer. I never felt so utterly helpless before—completely cut off from every resource. I felt the terrible energy and force of the passage, "having no hope, and without God in the world."

After dark, in this state of mind, I went to the spot to which I was accustomed to resort at that hour; and prostrated myself before God in perfect hopelessness. I offered no prayer, for I knew not what to say more than I had offered before, in the most humble manner. While in that posture, without any seeming effort on my part, my mind recurred to the life of Christ as it is written in the four Evangelists. I began at Bethlehem, followed the blessed Son of God through every event of his life, in the order of their occurrence, with more vivid distinctness than I had ever beheld them before. Light broke into my soul as I viewed each event, till I got to

the garden of Gethsemane; when sweet and tender emotions were kindled in my dormant heart, as I beheld the Son of God on the cold ground in deep agony for my sinful soul. But when I arrived at the cross, having passed the ill-treatment and condemnation of my Saviour; my heart was broken to pieces in a moment, in the twinkling of the eye. I gazed at that bleeding One for a moment, then passed rapidly on to the sepulchre, the resurrection, the ascension from Olivet, but soon returned to that delightful place, the cross. I was melted, completely subdued, and broken down in contemplating that spectacle.

“O, never till my latest breath,
Shall I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with his death,
Though not a word he spoke.

My conscience felt and owned the guilt;
It plunged me in despair;
I saw my sins his blood had spilt,
And helped to nail him there.

A second look he gave, which said,
‘I freely all forgive;
This blood is for thy ransom paid;
I die that thou may’st live.’”

I had wept often before, but never did I shed tears that gave my soul such relief.—Every fountain of my soul was broken up, and opened, and my eyes rained showers of tears, of the deepest penitence and love. Ever before this, it had been painful for me to weep, but now it was easy, natural and sweet. I was then conquered by love and grace as I had never been before. Blessed conquest! Precious Conqueror!

And what was it I saw that so subdued and melted my hard unbelieving heart? JESUS, *crucified for my sins!* “Who his ownself bore our sins in his own body on the tree; that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye are healed.” I beheld Him as my Surety, satisfying the claims of the holy law of God which were against me, by suffering death in my stead; meeting every claim of justice against me, as though I was answering to them in my own person: all this for me, a poor, guilty, vile sinner who deserved “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” I had never seen before how hateful sin was to Divine Holiness.

Jehovah spared not his own Son, when found "in fashion as a man"—man's surety. The thought that *my* sins had cost the Son of God so much pain, added to my poignant grief.

The vicariousness of Christ's sufferings was clear to my mind. I saw that they were perfectly satisfactory to every claim which the moral government of God held against me. God, the Father, looked down from heaven upon his crucified Son, "well pleased" with his offering for sin. Like the bitten Israelite, I looked up to him on the cross as my atoning sacrifice; and we met in Christ and were reconciled, and became one in the blessed Daysman. By faith I beheld "Christ Jesus; who, of God, was made unto me wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." Condemnation and guilt left me instantaneously, and I felt the power, and understood clearly the Bible doctrine of justification by faith, "without the deeds of the law." The doctrine of works and self-righteousness, as a ground of acceptance with God, was forever banished from my mind. My soul trusted on Christ, without fear, for salvation, and I was happy! happy!! happy!!! For hours I wept, praised and thanked God,

the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the great grace conferred on me. The Father I thanked and devoutly praised for devising the scheme of salvation, by which I was justified; the Son for executing it; and the Holy Spirit for applying it with power to my soul, and for revealing it with such vivid distinctness to my mind. As Peter on the "Holy Mount" when the glory of God overshadowed him, was surrounded by such holy company, and heard the voice of God from "the excellent glory," so I felt that "it was good to be there." And like the astonished and overwhelmed Jacob, I concluded, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

But the reader is anxious to know whether I had been deceived or not, up to that time. I had not. I was then confirmed in my former faith and hope, and was perfected in love. Perfect love had cast out all the previous fear that had given me so much torment. I plainly saw that my views of justification by faith in Christ alone, without the deeds of the law or good works, had been confused and indistinct,

during all my religious life, up to that time. My mind never had scripturally and fully grasped that comforting and soul-strengthening doctrine. Nor had I clearly apprehended the doctrine of atonement, as it is taught in the Bible. I knew pretty well what theological writers had said about it: but their teachings did not satisfy the pressing wants of my soul. "My soul desired the first ripe fruit." I had only seen Jesus, my surety, "through a glass darkly," satisfying the claims of the Divine Government against me; but I had not seen, till then, that He had satisfied every claim that law and justice held against me, and suffered for my sins in His own body, as though I had done it in my own person, and that the Father was as well satisfied with me, after I had believed in his Son, as though I had suffered the penalty of law and justice myself. This appeared to my mind then, and does still appear, to be the chief glory and perfection of the ever blessed gospel.

Likewise the soul-satisfying doctrine of imputation I had never viewed clearly. A perfect righteousness I saw, the law of God demanded; I had it not; and how Christ's

active and passive righteousness was to avail for me, and meet all the demands of the law against me, I could not distinctly see. I had read how it was to be done in theological books—had heard of it often in sermons—have preached it to others as far as I understood it from the teachings of the Bible; but the obscurity of the subject to my mind, was such that it did not comfort my own soul. I saw that I must have a perfect righteousness to “stand without fault before the throne of God”—to meet the requirements of that holy law by which I was to be judged. I had it not; and how I was to be received and acquitted in the name and for the sake of Christ, and how his work and righteousness were to be considered mine, were doctrines and ideas that my mind had never sufficiently grasped, to bring abiding peace and comfort to my soul. But I now saw myself “complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power;” and as abiding in Christ by faith: Christ in me, the Father in Christ, and the Holy Spirit my sanctifier, were thus “made perfect in one.” Being in Christ by faith, the Father had no more claims on me, in a legal point of

view, than he had against his Son; all the "hand writing against me," and all the claims of justice, "were blotted out," and satisfied on Calvary. The passage, "there is, therefore now, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," came with great power and comfort to my heart. I believed it, and felt it.

I received no new revelation; only the glorious facts and truths of the gospel, indistinctly seen before, by a weak and wavering faith, were then by the sovereign grace and power of the Holy Spirit clearly revealed; written, engraved and stereotyped on my heart, by the blood of the Covenant. The Divine Spirit was graciously pleased to make them so plain, that I see them now, with the same clearness that I did on that never-to-be-forgotten night. But to return to my narrative.

Feelings consequent upon such views, as those above related, are indiscribable; yet one will attempt it, and do the best he can. Quaint old divines used to say, "The Lord has no dumb children;" and I am such a debtor to grace, that I am constrained to magnify it. How long I remained at that Bethel and wept, thanked, prayed and praised, and talked to

my Lord, I cannot tell; I never felt so near to God before. I could say without doubt, "My beloved is mine and I am his." "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me." In Christ I could speak to Jehovah "face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend." He had come near to me in His Son. I believed and loved with my whole heart. I had no fear at all; perfect love had cast out all fear from my soul. My anxious and perturbed spirit was calm; it had found a resting place at last, at the cross. All nature around and above me praised God; and my soul was in sweet harmony with nature. Christ had restored me, whole, to my Father's house; and I was united in him to the pure and holy family of heaven, and they received me as a brother and rejoiced over me.

I returned to my house at some hour in the night, and found every thing quiet, and in the stillness of sleep; I retired to rest without awaking them. This I did purposely; for as yet I did not wish to make the matter known to any one. And, had I been enquired of, why

I was up so late, I could not have concealed it. Next morning, the natural sun in the heavens above, and the "Sun of Righteousness" in my soul, made a bright day. The Holy Spirit was also in my heart, taking of the precious things of Christ and showing them to me. Thus passed three or four days in great comfort and peace.

Strange to tell, after this gracious manifestation, "a horror of great darkness" fell upon me, the fifth day. I now see the work was not completed; and as my blessed Lord had begun it, he was determined to complete it in his own time, and in his own way. Blessed be his holy name!

As stated in the foregoing account, the scriptural views I had of Christ, were from his birth to his ascension; and my mind soon left Olivet and returned to Calvary, to look on that lovely One whom I had pierced, to love, adore and praise. All was clear as far as the Ascension. To complete my peace and happiness, my soul needed clearer views of the Mediation of Christ—of him as an High Priest in the heaven of heavens for me. The sacrifice on Calvary, seen by faith, had satisfied

my soul as to the "One offering," "the one sacrifice for sins," to satisfy the rigid demands of law and justice against me on earth; but such was my natural and moral impurity, that I needed one to plead my cause continually at the right hand of a holy God. Satisfied with the precious view the Holy Spirit was pleased to give me of the perfect work of Christ on earth, I could not see how that sacrifice offered on earth, could avail for me continually in heaven. At least, that matter was so obscurely understood, that it did not afford me that happiness which my soul so much desired. There was a vacuum in my soul that needed being filled, to complete the good work begun. From Bethlehem to Olivet—from the Birth to the Ascension, I saw and understood the work, and was happy. But how is it beyond Olivet? That was the question I wished solved.

But it pleased God to cut this work short: it only lasted one day. During that day of conflict, I read much in the epistle to the Hebrews, about the High Priesthood of Jesus; and indeed, in every part of the word of God where his High Priesthood and glorious mediation were treated of by the inspired writers.

In reading the Epistle to the Hebrews, I was naturally led by the writer, to look at Aaron and his office as high priest over Israel, as a striking type of Christ and his Priesthood over his Church. The *letter* of the analogy instituted by Paul, between the high priesthood of Aaron and that of Christ, my mind apprehended; but how Christ's mediation continually and fully met my wants, and gave me free access to an infinitely holy God, were subjects "too high for me" to comprehend sufficiently to make me believe them with my whole heart. The awful majesty of a just and holy God in heaven contrasted with me upon earth, compassed about with infirmity and sin, alarmed me greatly. I gloried in the sacrifice on Calvary; but does Calvary avail for *me* now? for sins committed every day? Does it give me freedom of speech with Jehovah? Does that holy Jehovah love me now? every moment? These were questions that deeply affected and greatly perplexed me.

With these and other unsolved difficulties, I went again to my Bethel; where I had seen the Lord on the cross, and beheld his resurrection, and had gazed at his ascension from

Mount Olivet in a cloud. I prostrated myself before the mercy seat of the Great KING, and was enabled by the Spirit to give up the solution of all my difficulties to Him whose right it is to clear up all mysteries, necessary to be known for the good of my soul. No sooner had I done this, than my mind recurred to the place of Christ's ascension, where I left off viewing Him before, to return to the cross to see that bleeding victim.

Here again I had no new revelation; I only saw things as they were revealed in the Scriptures by a strong faith, through the light of the Holy Spirit. I gazed at him as he ascended after his victory on Calvary, with his glorious attendants, and heard some of them boast of their number: "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place." Others responded, "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises to our King, sing praises. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive." Onward moved the stately procession of the Incarnate God, till it arrived at the

gates of the heaven of heavens, and the attendant angels demanded, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." Those within, as though they were astonished at such a summons, demanded, "Who is this King of glory?" To which his messengers responded more peremptorily, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." The porters within again demanded, "Who is this King of glory?" To which one universal response is given: "The Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle! the Lord of hosts; He is the King of glory!"

The right of the demand was recognized, "the everlasting gates were lifted up," and the "everlasting doors" were opened, and the Almighty traveller "from Edom," and the Man "with dyed garments from Bozrah," entered amid the principalities and powers of heaven. Presenting before the throne of the Father, all the evidences of a "finished" redemption on earth; the Father inaugurated Him King of kings and Lord of lords, thus:

“I will declare the decree: Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. And let all the angels of God worship him. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck. Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish but thou remainest: and they shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt

thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

My soul, by faith, was in that joyful assembly, celebrating the coronation of my Lord and King. I felt that He was worthy of all the honors conferred upon him, on that joyful and thrilling occasion; and I was inexpressibly happy. I participated in all their joys; and bowed in spirit with that immense throng of redeemed and angelic spirits, and at the conclusion of the Father's inaugural, united with them most joyfully, in saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

But the Lord was pleased to give me still another view of this glorious subject; which had respect to the High Priesthood of the Redeemer. I viewed him not only as "head over all things to the Church;" but as High Priest of the "new and everlasting covenant" "a priest forever after the order of Melchies-

deck;" so made by the oath of Jehovah, "sit on the right hand of the Majesty in heavens," "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man." As Aaron went into the "most holy place," once a year, as high priest of the Old Covenant, with the blood of beasts and holy incense, to make atonement for the sins of Israel, and to "appear in the presence of God" for them; so did Jesus, the High Priest and Mediator of the New Covenant, appear in the presence of God for us, and "offered himself without spot to God" for the sins of his people. He had, on earth—on Calvary—offered himself a sacrifice for sin as Priest; and when he ascended and "passed into the heavens," he appeared in the presence of God for his people, with all the marks and evidences of his crucifixion on earth, as our great High Priest; and by "the one offering of himself" before the Divine Throne, before all the principalities and powers of Heaven, "hath forever perfected them that are sanctified."

Thus my faith rested upon his sacrifice for sin in the "outer court" on earth; it rose with him from the tomb; ascended with him to hea-

ven; passed into it; beheld, and participated in his coronation-services, as King of saints and Lord of angels; passed within the vail, anchored on Him as High Priest, ever living to make intercession for me according to the will of God. My soul held him fast as the High Priest that was needed, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

Thus I found the way to that holy God, whose infinite purity had so long repulsed me. It was through the person, blood and righteousness of Jesus the Messiah. I could approach Jehovah now, without fear, through that "new made way," the crucified, risen, accepted, reigning and interceding Prince and Saviour. I had one betwixt me and that "Holy One of Israel," "touched with the feeling of my infirmity," who could "lay his hand upon us both," thereby "making peace"—who had died for me, bearing my sins in his own body, and was ever before the divine throne, pleading my cause. "He ever liveth to make intercession."

My way into the "most holy place" being now laid open, I was filled with such ecstatic joy that I could not hold my peace. I praised

God aloud. "My "wilderness and solitary Bethel was made glad," and was again to me the house of God, and the gate of heaven. The moon and stars helped me to praise God, and to break the stillness of night. So transported was I, that I wished to leave the earth; and like Peter on Mount Tabor, I was dazzled, bewildered and overpowered with the glory of God at the transfiguration, "not knowing what I said." I was so intemperate in my wishes as to ask God to take me, then. At that moment the summons to appear in the court of my Redeemer and King, would have been the most joyful news that ever saluted my ears. "My heart and my flesh cried out" for it. But the address of the angel of the Covenant to Daniel, "Go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days," came with power into my mind, and reproved my rash desire and request.

My last difficulty was then and there removed; and I returned home at a late hour, happy in the Lord, without a doubt or a fear in my soul. I both laid me down in peace and

slept. I awoke early, and what a sight! The heavens declared the glory of God, and the firmament showed his handy work. The day uttered its speech, in praise of him who said, "Let there be light!" All nature lifted up its hands and voice on high, in adoration and praise. The deep lifted up its harmonious tones. I went out with joy and was led forth with peace: the mountains and hills broke forth into singing; and all the trees of the field clapped their hands. Instead of the thorn came up the fir tree, and instead of the brier came up the myrtle tree. And the sun in mid-heaven shone no brighter than did the "Sun of Righteousness" in my soul. "For the glory of God did brighten it, and the Lamb was the light thereof."

For several days I continued in this state of mind; weeping, praising and adoring. I was as little inclined to make it public as I had ever been. I feared it might not last, and that I would again relapse into darkness and doubts. Like the man in the parable, I hid the treasure for a short time. But I felt it to be my duty to make known the gracious de-

liverance to the brother with whom I had corresponded in such a despairing manner. This I did as follows:

“My dear brother: I am glad I did not go to the Convention with you; for my mind might have been diverted from an investigation that has deeply enlisted my feelings for years. It has lately shaken my soul to its centre; about which I have given you some intimations, by letter and in conversation. But I am now entirely relieved and perfectly satisfied. God, for the sake of his dear Son, has had mercy upon me, and has enabled me to triumph over all my enemies. He first led me to the Red Sea; I was environed on every side; hotly pursued by cruel, unrelenting foes; I cried for help. He bade me “stand still and see the salvation of the Lord;” the rod of Divine power was stretched out; the waters parted; I passed over safely. My enemies essaying to follow me, were overthrown, chariot, horse and rider, and I saw them no more. ‘The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.’ I am now on the banks, ‘singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.' The bright side of the "Pillar of Cloud" was turned to me, and the dark side to my enemies. My sky is now clear, the sun shines brightly, without an intervening cloud; my faith is strong in the Lord and in the power of his might; my hope is firmly fixed upon the 'Chief Corner Stone;' and my soul is happy in contemplating the sacrifice, person and offices of my exalted and glorified Redeemer. At last, He has brought me fully into his banqueting house, and his banner over me is love.

"To drop figures: The Lord has been graciously pleased to relieve me of all the perplexing doubts and harrassing fears as to my acceptance with him, which I have so long entertained. What tormenting guests they have been! But they are expelled by the power of the Highest, and that ever recurring question, *Am I a Christian? a converted man?* is now settled. I have had evidences of my being a son of God since I last wrote, which it would be sinful to doubt. I am now satisfied that I was converted when I first joined the Church of

Christ; but my views of the doctrine of justification by faith in the atoning sacrifice and righteous merits of Jesus were so imperfect that I have been a large portion of my religious life, miserable. I have been up to this time, searching for the living among the dead; searching for a living, perfect righteousness in my poor, vile, contaminated soul, to commend me to a holy God; but I had not found it. What a fruitless search! I have found nothing but Isaiah's 'filthy rag' righteousness. But blessed be God! when I turned away from self, and looked steadfastly at the cross, my heart was broken; tears, sweet penitential tears, flowed as they never flowed before. My soul was a deep fountain of penitence, and my eyes rivers of tears. It was a precious Boehim, where tears and joys were sweetly blended. I loved a reconciled God in the person of Jesus, as I had never loved before. It was a precious, confiding 'Abba Father' love. Self, vile, obstrusive self, was renounced, and I was fully satisfied with God's plan of mercy and grace. I saw that the Lord Jehovah was 'well pleased' with the sacrificial work of his

Son, and my soul acquiesced—my faith laid hold of him as Divine Trinity.

“These views that I have imperfectly described, and others beyond the power of description which I had of the Lord Jesus—satisfying all the claims of the Divine government against me—meeting all my wants—bearing my sins in his own body upon the tree—making his work and righteousness my own—made me inexpressibly happy. And I now stand “by faith in this grace, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

“I have no controversy with Jehovah. I am fully satisfied with his entire plan of saving mercy and grace. I am willing for the Lord to be God, and to follow him. I have given myself to him, without reserve, in the bonds of an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. 'Tis a ‘covenant of salt,’ it saves my soul from moral putrefaction; a covenant ratified by vicarious blood, for it atones for sin and cleanses from all unrighteousness.

“Help me to praise Him; for his goodness and mercy endure forever. I think of the pas-

sage often, realizingly, when I look at Jesus, my sacrifice on Calvary, and my High Priest in heaven: 'This is my rest forever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it.'"

The brother with whom I was corresponding had been from the first blessed with clearer views of salvation than I, and had often chided me by letter and in conversation for my want of faith. But when he read the above, he replied in a letter full of sympathy and condolence; and apologised lest he should have given me pain, and congratulated me on my triumph through the Saviour. To which I responded in the following manner:

"As for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped."—Asaph. in Ps. lxxvii.

"My dear Brother:—I received from you, this morning, just such a letter as I expected. For I knew that, as soon as you understood that my conflict with the 'wild beasts at Ephesus' was a real one, you would relent and rejoice with me in my victory. And such, thank God, has been the result. I shed tears freely in reading your kind letter. Thank the Lord! for Christian fellowship and sympathy. No Christian is promoted without fil-

ling the whole family on earth with joy, if it is known. And what must be their joy above who see the end which God has in view in such a case? For whatever glorifies God, fills them with exceeding great joy and praise. Glory be to God! for union with such a family. The eyes of all the redeemed in heaven and on earth are turned to Him, as the fountain of all gracious influences. There we all meet; and angels rejoice over the union. Those are sweet passages, 'For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.' 'For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. It is safe, then, and we can draw upon it by faith, and receive supplies of grace to help in time of need. To grow in grace, we must go to this rich depository often; for, as in the case of the Isrealites, the manna of yesterday will not do for to-day. We must draw upon our Fountain Head. To encourage us in this, Paul has given us a precious morsel: 'Holding the Head from which all the body by joints and bonds having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the

increase of God.' I will leave you to comment upon, and apply this passage.

"Do not reflect upon yourself for writing as you did; I am glad of it. 'Let the righteous smite me.' It was the Lord's work, and he perfected it, without the aid of any one, friend or foe. I am perfectly satisfied with it; and to His name be all the praise! The Lord will hear prayer, offered in the name of Jesus. I have long prayed for confirmation in my hope, and He has graciously granted it. I now know, not from nature and the Bible alone, that there is a God in Israel; but the evidence is in my heart. Peter could say, 'We believe and are sure, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.' I think I can humbly say the same without lying to the Holy Spirit.—Gentiles saved by grace can appeal to Jehovah and say, 'Doubtless thou art our Father; though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not.' What a precious little word is ABBA, to a pardoned and adopted sinner! Boston says, it spells the same thing both ways. He thinks much of that little word, and fills it full of meaning. But no doubt that stern, pious puritan loved the ideas

and privileges attached to it infinitely better than the mere word—loved the things freighted to his soul more than the vehicle that conveyed them. ‘Abba Father!’ *My Father!* By the way, I have read that quaint old author with great profit, lately. God send the Christian Church many such men! I am a seventeenth century man in my theology and feelings. I prayed to God for Bible and old-fashioned piety and spirituality. I wanted no superficial stuff. I have but little patience with, and taste for, the most of our modern authors. They are too poor in thought, and too shallow in piety; and of deep-toned spirituality they seem to have none. If I am wrong in this charge, God forgive me!

I have no idea of paying the Lord for what he has done for my soul; but it is my prayer that he should spare my life, that I may labor in his vineyard, and do something towards making up my lost time. I feel that after a little more preparation in the woods, it will soon be a pleasure to me to preach the gospel. I begin to feel and see what Paul meant when he said, ‘I thank God that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.’ I look

back upon my past life with deep regret. Like penitent Ephraim, 'I bear the reproach of my youth.' My experience is not unlike his in Jeremiah 31: 18-20, 'I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself, thus; thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou are the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.' My life has been a life of vanity and folly, but the Lord has graciously pardoned me. "Few and evil have been my days," said the godly Jacob; and what should be my confession? O that God may spare me; that I may do something as an instrument, to promote his cause in the world.

"I am anxious to see the ministers of our Association, to give them a word of exhorta-

tion. I hope I shall be profitable to them, should the Lord spare me to see them. I feel the force of the injunction, 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' Alas! for the want of spirituality among ministers generally. 'The sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.' What a fearful doom upon the 'idol shepherd!' And who is the 'idol shepherd,' but the man who 'feeds himself,' as saith Ezekiel? the man who feeds himself with vanity and folly—who loves ease and self indulgence, and the applause of men—who 'sacrifices to his own net, and burns incense to his own drag.' The Lord save you and me from the fearful doom of the 'brutish pastors that have not sought the Lord.' How can I indulge in levity, vanity and folly, as I have done? God forbid!

"You ask an interest in my prayers. Such a request I cannot refuse. But I have so much need for intercession in my own behalf, that I can think, for the present, of but few. How troublesome I have been to my merciful High Priest! Surely he has had to intercede

for me more than any one else. If He could be wearied, surely I have wearied Him. But He is full of grace! grace!! grace!!! I will not forget you, however. I have felt a spirit of prayer lately, for ministers of the gospel. I hope the Lord will enlarge my desires for them, for the Church of Christ, and for the world.

"I would like to see you, that we might benefit each other more than we have ever done. I fear I have been in the way of your religious progress, by my want of spirituality. Pardon me, I beseech you. I have great reason to be humbled in the dust.

"And now, dear brother, let us covenant together to be more faithful to God, more heavenly minded and pious. It is the lock of our strength as ministers; take that away and we 'shall become weak, and be like other men.' As Jehu said to Jehonadab, 'Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? If it be, give me thine hand.' I am yours, in the hope of standing 'without fault before the throne of God.'"

I still continued in this happy frame of mind; and in reply to a letter from my friend,

in answer to the one just read, I expressed myself thus:

“Grace reigns.”—PAUL.

“Beloved brother in Christ—The best monarch that ever assembled a throne on earth, and reigned over man, is GRACE. And strange to tell, he never reigns without having first to conquer his subjects—all are rebels to him, by nature. Other monarchs ascend thrones hereditarily, and their subjects acquiesce; but not so with our monarch, Grace. He must conquer his throne and kingdom. But when he conquers once, he neither abdicates, nor suffers himself to be dethroned, like some earthly princes. He holds on to his dominion with an *Almighty energy*; the opposition he meets is *but mighty*, hence he is always triumphant. He quickens, renews, sanctifies, and leads on his subjects in the way of peace; prevents their final apostasy, and makes them ‘meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.’

“I think he has seldom found (with shame I write it) a more rebellious, stiff-necked, sinful and ungrateful subject than I have been, ever since he undertook my subjugation.

tion. But I yield. I own him conqueror. I trust there never will be another rebellion in my 'Mansoul;' for I have found that Immanuel does not return to a backslider immediately.

"I would like if I had time, and I were sure it would interest you, to give you a full account of the dealings of God with my soul. Jeremiah ever had in remembrance the wormwood and the gall. Moses never forgot Egypt, nor the journey through the wilderness; but, he could rehearse the dealings of God distinctly, just before he ascended Pisgah. And, so vividly is this new work of grace impressed upon my soul, that neither time nor eternity can efface it. 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' This I will do, the Spirit helping me, on all fit occasions. O that God would assist me to stir up his people to more holy living! Alas! for the low standard of holiness in the churches. Let us, with God's help, come to the perfect stature of a man in Christ Jesus, that we may do something towards their spiritual elevation. But, remember, we must get to that standard ourselves, before our lever will be strong enough

to raise them. So long as we are dwarfs in holiness ourselves, our congregations will be children in spirituality—‘babes in Christ.’ ‘Like priest, like people’—how true the proverb.

“I am, now, forty years old; and I feel that I am just preparing for the ministry. True, I have prepared my intellect somewhat, but not my heart. But it is like wheat, compared to chaff. And the question is significantly asked, ‘What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.’ I have made myself ‘the keeper of vineyards; but mine own vineyard I have not kept.’ Alas! what a wilderness of briers and thorns which is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned!’ I have lived a selfish life—a large portion of it ‘sacrificing to my own net, and burning incense to my own drag,’ I have not had wholly, the glory of God in view, and the praise of Christ before my mind. The inhabitants of Jericho said to Elisha, the prophet, ‘Behold, we pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, but the water is naught, and the ground is barren.’—This is a true picture of my heart, thus far, through life. How unfit I have been for a

minister of the holy Jesus! How little like Christ, who is 'a bundle of myrrh.'

"The time is short, and *heart* preparation must be made. And 'until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense,'—Song, iv: 6. I must live in the mountain, to obtain the sweet savor of Christ in my soul. I have been sufficiently long 'on the mountain of leopards and in the lions' den.'—I must be out, and behold the Lord from 'Shinar and from Lebanon.' I must 'remember Him from beyond Jordan, from Hermon and from the hill Mizar.'—Ps. xlii. I have left my study somewhat; and I spend a good portion of my time in the woods with my Bible. I find, after all, 'the secret places of the stairs' are the best place to prepare for the ministry. Without secret-prayer-preparation, we are like Dean Swift's Lilliputians in the ministry of the word; but, with it, we are spiritual Sampsons. When Moses came down to the camp of Israel from Mount Sinai, after fasting, praying and conversing with the Lord forty days and nights, his face shone in a heavenly manner. Elijah returned from Horeb, after

hearing the 'still small voice,' destitute of the feelings he had 'under the juniper tree in the wilderness of Beersheba.' And the holy Jesus, after praying and fasting forty days and nights in the wilderness of Judea, and after his temptation, 'returned into Galilee in the power of the Spirit.' Time would fail me to speak of others. Our heavenly Father will reward us openly, if we pray to him in secret. And the greatest reward a godly minister wishes, is success in his work.

"I am trying to preach Christ to the people; but surely the Lord will not speak through such an unsanctified man. As yet, the vessel is too unholy for the Spirit to dwell in, I fear. 'Be ye clean, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord.' The Israelites by their unfaithfulness left much of the land, given to Abraham in covenant, in possession of the Canaanites; in like manner my want of faith, and lack of conformity to Christ, has given the Adversary such a hold in my churches, that it will require much labor and toil, 'strong crying and tears,' to dislodge him. 'As for the Jebusites the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Je-

busites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.'—Josh. xv: 33. O for the spirit of David, the king, to go up and smite them, 'and take the castle of Zion!'—True, I speak with more earnestness than I did before this blessed work was wrought in my soul; but I need more grace to warm this cold heart, that I may speak like an accountable man to accountable men.

“Write soon, and do say something to rouse me up. I need quickening every moment. I am tempted to think you will accuse me of boasting. Be it so. I will boast and glory in Christ. But should I forget, and boast and glory in the flesh, the Lord will rebuke me. I am in his hands; He has begun the work, and he will finish it, 'to the praise of the glory of his grace.' Let us meet often at a throne of Grace. I am yours, in 'covenant of salt.'”

On December 23d, 1851, of that memorable year of my soul's existence, I wrote to another friend of mine, and in a paragraph alluded to the subject. My deliverance was about the first of June of that year; and the reader will

see by reading the extract of December 23d, the state of my mind at that time. I then say:

“The year is drawing to a close, and a memorable year it has been to me. I have this year decided a question that has long perplexed me: *Whether I was a child of God or not?* I would like to spend a few hours with you, to inform you how good the Lord has been to me, a poor sinner. I have had evidences of my acceptance with God this year, which it would be sinful to doubt. I sought them by earnest, constant prayer; and the Lord heard me and had mercy upon my soul, and lifted it out of the deep waters. In my distress I came to the Red Sea; the rod of the covenant was stretched out, and all my enemies were overthrown, horse and rider. I am on my journey through the wilderness, with the cloud over me by day, the pillar of fire by night, and the stream from the rock ever present. I sometimes get into ‘darkness and have no light,’ but I trust in the Lord, and stay my soul upon the mighty God of Jacob. The covenant! the covenant!! it will stand, and Jehovah will do all his pleasure. At last I have attained to Job’s resolution, from my heart, ‘though he

slay me, yet will I trust in him.' What more can a poor sinner do? The Master requires no more. The atonement of Christ, how interesting to my soul; and the mediation of the exalted Jesus, how precious! But why need I speak of Christ in a divided sense? He is a whole and perfect Savior. He is every thing to my soul. I need nothing else for salvation. As I behold and gaze upon Him, *he increases*, and I *decrease*. What John said of Jesus, 'He must increase, but I must decrease,' is true of my daily experience. How poor am I in every thing that would commend one to God, and how rich is He in all things! I am poorer this year, yea, this moment, in myself than I ever was before; but richer in faith, righteousness and true holiness. I can say with Paul, 'I protest unto you that I die daily' to self-righteousness; but Jesus lives as I am crucified in the flesh. I now know what Paul meant when he said, I have no confidence in the flesh.' 'The elder shall serve the younger.' This is being fulfilled in me. 'The elder,' the flesh, is serving 'the younger,' the spirit. Help me, my brother, to praise the Lord for his goodness and grace."

With this extract I close my narrative. If the reader wishes to know my religious state now, I could say much; but I refer him to the closing paragraph. I still rest upon those precious doctrines and ideas, while the Holy Spirit is pleased to enlarge my views of them. I am a redeemed, saved sinner, trusting alone in Jesus for salvation. I have ceased to look into myself for anything to commend me to God. I turn away from every thing but Christ, and set him always before my face. I labor to promote his cause with my feeble instrumentality; but there is no merit in it; it is done as a servant. I have had no conflicts since; because I have ceased to look at self, and I look at none but Jesus. He is able and willing to save me, and I have given my soul into his hands. In him, reader, if you are a Christian, we shall stand in the last day "without fault before the throne of God."













